pear, while the Demons ineffectually endeavour to pursue a victim which the most amiable & most powerful of the Gods had rescued from their cruelty.

REMARKS

ON THE

FAVOURITE BALLET

OF

Cupid and *Psyche*;

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT

OF THE

Pantomime of the Ancients,

AND OTHER

OBSERVATIONS.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN STOCKDALE, opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly.

MDCCLXXXVIII.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

Vet. A5 f. 3043

30 MAR 1973
LIBRARY

REMARKS, &c.

LET us be allowed to praiſe the times in which we live. An æra ſo propitious to the progreſs of the Arts has never yet been ſeen in Britain. Throughout the preſent reign, the patronage of the great, and more eſpecially of the greateſt, has conſtantly promoted their advancement. Knowledge has been

greatly diffuſed, and taſte aſſiduouſly cultivated. Yet has this progreſs been oppoſed occaſionally by very hoſtile circumſtances. Civil fermentation and diſquiet have often filled the minds of men with faction, or inflamed them into rage; and actual war, of ſuch a nature as to drain, and apparently to exhauſt the reſources of the country, interpoſed for a while a ſtill more dreadful obſtacle. But the ſecurity of peace has returned. Wealth has again increaſed, beyond what was hoped, beyond what was imagined poſſible. Virtuous attention has diſcovered, and brought into action, the

vigour of the ſtate. We are reſpected abroad, for our reſources have been ſhown; we are tranquil at home, for the Government poſſeſſes, as it ought, the confidence of the people. This, then, is the time for the genius of Britain, if ever it can hope to do ſo, to rival that of Greece. Good ſenſe, taſte, opulence, leiſure, ſecurity, all operate in its favour: it is the buſineſs of thoſe who conſider the polite arts philoſophically, to excite, and, as much as poſſible, to aſſiſt the efforts of genius.

Painting, ſculpture, muſic, poetry, eloquence, are objects truly worthy of

attention. The ſuperficial conſider them as mere amuſements: the moroſe as trifling, and perhaps pernicious luxuries. But the Ancients thought, and not without reaſon, that good taſte was eſſentially connected with morality. To point out, in every particular, the nature of this connection, would require a diſcuſſion ill ſuited to a trifling work like this: thus much, however, is very evident; that while the pleaſures of mankind tend chiefly to the gratification of the mind, the refinement of the judgment, and the improvement of the underſtanding, good, rather than ill, is likely to enſue. Let

it not then be thought ſtrange, that one who profeſſes to think philoſophically, ſhould condeſcend to analyze a dance. The Ballet now under conſideration is an admirable work of art; it recals the memory of what has been written on ſimilar ſubjects by the authors of antiquity, and it preſents to our view a diſtinct repreſentation of a very ancient and very extraordinary Fable.

But to return for a while to the ſituation of the Arts among us. The advances of Painting and of Sculpture, but eſpecially the former, may be contemplated in the houſes of the great, in the annual exhi-

bitions, and in the decorations of public edifices. Architecture, an art very intimately connected with Sculpture and Painting, is gradually filling the metropolis with laſting monuments of her improvement. Muſic, encouraged at this moment by an attention exceeding the experience of former times, is relieved at length from the attacks of prejudice and party. No ſtyle enjoys at preſent an excluſive preference. The delicacy of the Italian melodies is heard with exquiſite delight, and the ſublimity of Handel's imitative harmonies, with high and rapturous aſtoniſhment. In Poetry, genius ſeems to be

be leſs wanting than judgment. The public taſte, though much indeed miſled by the uſe of falſe, fantaſtic, and ambitious ornaments, is not yet apparently too far depraved to be recalled to truth by the diffuſion of a ſounder criticiſm, and the introduction of chaſter models. Eloquence, under which I include the powers of ſpeaking and of writing, has now perhaps attained its higheſt point of cultivation. To the copiouſneſs and energy of our language, correctneſs and preciſion have been added; a ſtructure of ſentences more perfect and more harmonious has been introduced; and we have many now among us who, both

both in writing and in ſpeaking, can give the language, thus improved, its utmoſt weight of effect.

In this very flouriſhing ſituation of things, it may perhaps have eſcaped the notice of ſome obſervers, that an art, entirely new to us, has been within theſe few years introduced; namely, *the art of imitative dance* or *pantomime*. An event ſo extraordinary ought not to be paſſed in ſilence; and though the beautiful Ballet of *Cupid* and *Pſyche*, which now attracts the notice of the public, be not the firſt example of the kind, yet being of a rank in merit which entitles it to diſtinction,

diſtinction, it affords an occaſion not to be neglected of delivering what may ſeem important on the ſubject.

The art of dancing conſiſts properly of two parts, diſtinct entirely from each other: of which, one may be termed *gymnaſtic*, the other *mimetic* or imitative. The former of theſe is certainly, as to its origin, no more than a conſequence of that propenſity which all animals have to exerciſe their bodies, as health itſelf requires, by quick and active motions; refined in man, and made more perfect by a taſte for regular cadence, and a love of ſportive elegance: all which propen-

ſities

ſities the natural and irreſiſtible effect of muſic moſt powerfully excites. The other part of the art conſiſts of pure imitation, and ranks of courſe with ſome of the beſt efforts of muſic and of poetry. This imitation is carried on by means of regulated geſtures, which either by their mechanical effect diſpoſe the mind to certain impreſſions, or actually repreſent the events, paſſions, and ſituations therein deſcribed.

Among us the idea of Dance, till lately, has only been annexed to the regulated motions of the feet; and conſequently the praiſe of lightneſs, elegance, and

and activity, has been ſuppoſed to ſum up all its perfections. In a word, to recur to the notions above ſtated, the *gymnaſtic* part of the art has been admired and cultivated, while the *mimetic* has remained almoſt unnoticed.

Like other imitations, that of pantomime or dance may be divided into three ſpecies: the tragic, the comic, and the farcical. Of theſe the latter has indeed, in the farces called pantomimes, been cultivated with ſome little ſucceſs as to the mimetic part; but, on the contrary, with the utmoſt negligence as to the elegant and regulated motions of the art. There

is

is indeed throughout a muſical accompaniment, but of all the perſonages, Harlequin alone is uſually attentive to the cadence of the muſic. But while the loweſt of theſe ſpecies has thus imperfectly been tried, the two higher, except in the ſpecimens exhibited on the Opera ſtage, have been almoſt unknown *.

The ancients, who in their eſtimation of the Dance conſidered chiefly its mimetic powers, regarded it with very different eyes. Being in its origin united with muſic, ſolemn or feſtive, in the ſervice of

* A fine opportunity of introducing ſerious pantomime, with much effect, was loſt, in the magical part of the *Enchanted Caſtle*.

re-

religion, it acquired thereby a dignity which in modern times it never has poſſeſſed. The moſt ſacred myſteries of heatheniſm were thus accompanied. Appollo, in a paſſage of Pindar, is called the *Dancer* * : and there is a Greek line extant which repreſents even Jupiter himſelf in the very act of dancing †. Even at Rome, where the Dance was on the whole much leſs reſpected, the prieſts of Mars, to whom the care of the ſacred *ancilia* was committed, were, from their cuſtomary and ſolemn dances, denominated *Salii* ‡. Of the

* ὀρχηστὴς.

† Μέσσοισι δ' ὠρχεῖτο παλὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε, Θεῶν τε.

‡ From *Salio*.

imi-

imitative Dance both Plato and Xenophon, in the perſon of their maſter Socrates, ſpeak very favourably; and Ariſtotle expreſsly ranks it with the art of Poetry. Plutarch conſidered it as worthy of diſtinct diſcuſſion *; and Lucian, an author certainly not deficient in genius or ſagacity, has left us an expreſs eulogium, in which he ſcruples not to prefer the *orcheſtic* to the ſpeaking dramas. "The Greeks," ſays Athenæus, "had "brought their Dance to ſuch perfection, "in the art of imitating the paſſions, that "the moſt eminent ſculptors thought

* In the laſt book of Sympoſiac Queſtions.

"their

" their time not ill employed in ſtudying " and deſigning the attitudes of the pub- " lic dancers. And to this ſtudy, he " adds, they owed undoubtedly ſome of " the moſt tranſcendent beauties of their " works."

This perfect ſpecies of mimetic dance was conſtantly united with muſic, vocal and inſtrumental, in the choruſes of the Tragic, Comic, and Satyric Dramas; which exhibited the three diſtinct ſpecies of imitation above enumerated*. And though it does not appear that per-

* Theſe were diſtinguiſhed by the names of *Emmelia*, *Cordax*, and *Sikinnis*.

formances of mere unmixed pantomime were ever common among the independent Greeks, it is certain, that at Rome, under the government of Auguſtus, ſuch entertainments became faſhionable; and for ſome centuries enſuing were cultivated with an eagerneſs that degenerated at length into abſurdity and vice. In all theſe dances, the motions of the hands*, and

* Called χειρονόμια: which is thus deſcribed in an ancient epigram:

Ingreſſus ſcenam populum ſaltator adorat,
Solerti ſpondens prodere verba manu.
Tot linguæ quot verba viro; mirabilis eſt ars
Quæ facit articulos voce ſilente loqui.

Coll. Pithæan.

This

and the geſtures of the body, were eſteemed no leſs eſſential than the pulſations of the feet: and if in the accounts of thoſe performances now extant we find no mention of the expreſſion and action of the countenance, it is owing to the uſe of maſks, which the vaſt extent of the ancient theatres made neceſſary, rather than offenſive.

This is alſo very curiouſly expreſſed, though not very claſſically, by Caſſiodorus, an author of the ſixth century: "His ſunt additæ orchiſtarum "loquaciſſimæ manus, linguoſi digiti, *clamoſum* "*ſilentium*, expoſitio tacita, quam muſa Polym-"nia reperiſſe narratur, oſtendens homines poſſe "et ſine oris afflatu ſuum velle declarare."

By Mr. Noverre and other artiſts of his nation, the ſerious and comic Pantomimes of the ancients appear to have been completely revived. Nor does there ſeem to be any ſufficient reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the grand ballets, lately exhibited in the theatres of Paris and London, are inferior, in any material point, to thoſe which formerly delighted the wits and philoſophers of Athens, or the poliſhed courtiers of the Roman metropolis; in the circumſtance juſt mentioned, the expreſſions of the countenance, they cannot poſſibly fail to be ſuperior. The ſtyle of Le Picq, and of the

the elder Veſtris, is that for which the Roman Pylades was ſo admired; and the younger Veſtris is, doubtleſs, in all points of excellence, the Bathyllus of the moderns: ſo admirable are the two former in the grave and tragic dance, and the latter in the elegance of comic levity *.

Whether the grand ballet of *Medea* and *Jaſon* were or not the firſt complete performance of the kind repreſented in

* So diſtinct were the ſtyles of thoſe two ancient dancers, that, according to Seneca, neither Pylades in comedy, nor Bathyllus in tragedy, could be reckoned comparable to themſelves.

this country, I have not thought it material to enquire: it was the firſt that I remember, and was certainly a drama of very tranſcendent excellence. In this the triumph of the expreſſion of countenance was ſo extraordinary, that the public ſaw with wonder, the aſtoniſhing powers of their juſtly extolled Siddons, almoſt rivalled by the looks and geſtures of Madame Simonet. The Deſerter followed, in which Le Picq, and D'Auberval, in their contraſted ſtyles, gained little leſs applauſe. Without, however, attempting to go through the hiſtory of theſe repreſentations, I will haſten to the

wonder

wonder of the preſent year, *L'Amour et Pſiché*; a pantomime, for ſo it ought claſſically to be called, inferior indeed in ſome reſpects to the two above mentioned, yet of varied and extraordinary excellence enough to merit a diſtinct diſcuſſion.

Rouſſeau very juſtly conſiders the expreſſion of the looks and geſtures, as an univerſal language. But, in England, the extenſive powers of this ſpecies of eloquence have been little known, till the æra of theſe celebrated pantomimes. That our neighbours on the continent ſhould have preceded us in the diſcovery

and cultivation of theſe powers is not extraordinary; ſince not only their ideas are more lively, but the common tenor of their diſcourſe is much more accompanied than ours by the language of looks and geſtures. That we are not yet inſenſible to theſe things, when properly diſplayed before us, the effect and popularity of theſe fine performances will very ſufficiently demonſtrate.

Yet, touched and enchanted as ſome among us are, by the graces and lively expreſſion of theſe elegant actors, there are not wanting among us moroſe and ſturdy Engliſhmen, who think ſcorn (to

uſe

uſe an antiquated phraſe) to be delighted by arts of French invention, and conſider every thing that is denominated a Dance as unworthy either of critical examination or ſerious attention. Uſeful as this patriotiſm, and noble as this ſublimity of ſentiment may be found when properly exerted, I muſt venture at preſent to oppoſe them both; and have purpoſely recalled the memory of claſſical examples, becauſe it is certain that many will venerate in Greek, what in French and Engliſh they deſpiſe.

In the choice and execution of the ſubject of *Cupid* and *Pſyche*, Mr. Noverre

verre has very extraordinary merit. The fable is elegant and well known, and of ſuch a kind as to allow the ſtrongeſt effect and contraſt of ſcenery; a circumſtance, if not eſſential, yet highly ornamental to Dramas of this nature. It admits alſo, what is more important, the moſt ſtriking contraſts of paſſions and ſituation; a diverſity no leſs than the tranſition from the extremes of miſery to the perfection of delight, from Hell to Heaven. Nor do I perceive that, in the conduct of his piece, the author has fallen into any material fault. What was improper for pantomimic repreſentation

tation he has very judiciouſly altered or omitted; and the circumſtances invented by him are always ſuch as the mind receives with acquieſcence, and even with pleaſure. For the nymphs who attend on Pſyche he has the authority of la Fontaine, who thus apologizes for the ſame conduct in his own Romance. "Apulée "fait ſervir Pſiché par des voix dans un "lieu où rien ne doit manquer à ſes "plaiſirs, c'eſt à dire qu'il lui fait goûter "ces plaiſirs ſans que perſonne paroiſſe. "Premierement cette ſolitude eſt en-"nuyeuſe, outre cela elle eſt effroyable. "Où eſt l'Avanturier et le Brave qui "toucheroit à des viandes leſquelles vien-"droient

" droient d'elles mêmes ſe preſenter ? " Si un Lut joüoit tout ſeul, il me ſe- " roit fuïr, moi qui aime extremement " la muſique. Je fais donc ſervir Pſiché " par des Nymphes." Upon the whole, ſo much contrivance, ſo much taſte, ſo much judgment, ſo exquiſite a ſkill in diſpoſing and grouping his perſonages, has been diſplayed by Mr. Noverre in the compoſition of this Ballet, that one cannot but rejoice at his having received an honour ſo unheard of in this country, though common in his own, as that of being called for by the audience, at the cloſe of the firſt repreſentation.

To the praiſes which *M. Veſtris* has always

always received, from all ſpectators of his performances, nothing can be added; and from them certainly nothing ought to be detracted. In the preſent Drama he is undoubtedly as ſuitable a repreſentative for the heathen Deity he perſonates, as can be found among mortals: and he has this privilege above the lot of other men, that he ſeems, like a real divinity, to touch the ground by choice only, not by neceſſity; the grace and lightneſs of his motions conveying the idea that the air, if he pleaſed to tread it, were quite ſufficient to ſupport him.

Happily,

Happily, *Miſs Hilliſgberg* alſo, is, perhaps, of all human creatures now exiſting, the fitteſt to aſſume the perſon of Pſyche; not in her hiſtorical quality of a mortal princeſs, but in that of which more will preſently be ſaid, her allegorical character of *the human ſoul*. Embodied air ſeems a deſcription almoſt too groſs to expreſs the delicacy of her form. Her treſſes float like ſummer clouds; and her geſtures, though ſometimes apparently beyond the power of human exertions, have all the grace of ſomething ſuperior to humanity. Her agony of rapture at the appearance of

Cupid

Cupid to reſcue her from the infernal tormentors, has, united with an expreſſion which thrills through every nerve of the ſpectator, an elegance, which, if he viewed it only as the ſtudy of a Painter, muſt enrapture and tranſport him.

Were I to allow myſelf to find fault with a performance of ſuch merit as this Ballet, it would be the want of contrivance in the ſleep which falls upon Cupid, to which I ſhould object. There is ſomething ridiculous and almoſt indelicate, in the manner in which this circumſtance is now conducted. It would

ſurely

ſurely be more natural for both parties to denote their joy in feſtive dances, till fatigue might reaſonably be ſuppoſed to overtake them: ſleep would very properly enſue; and nothing would be wanting but the introduction of ſome allegorical perſonage to diſturb the reſt of Pſyche, agitate her with frightful dreams, and then awaken her to the commiſſion of that offence for which ſhe is to ſuffer ſo ſeverely.

The ſcenery and decorations of this grand Ballet are, in the higheſt degree, magnificent, and give thereby a very honourable teſtimony to the ſpirit and liberality of

of the manager. Two trifling circumſtances, reſpecting the ſcenery, might, however, be improved. The waves of the infernal river turn, at preſent, too evidently upon a pivot. Their diameter is not ſufficiently great to deceive the eye in the time of their revolution. Their effect would be much more ſtriking were they conſtructed of a larger ſize, and made, inſtead of revolving rapidly upon an axis, to undulate with a ſlow and gentle motion. It ſhould have been conſidered that ſeas of fire, being much leſs common in nature than thoſe of water, require to be repreſented with more accuracy and

contrivance, if the artiſt would expect to produce a tolerable deception. The other improvement is yet more minute. After the tremendous leap of Pſyche into the flaming gulph, ſhe is forcibly brought up by the Demons, through a chaſm in the infernal ſoil, which is in fact a trap-door. This we know it muſt be; but alas, to all who ſit in a ſituation more elevated than the pit, the work of the carpenter is perfectly conſpicuous; and the burſting flames, which ought to fill the ſoul with horror, are ſeen to iſſue through a regularly ſquare opening of planed wood. A piece of falſe floor with edges irregularly broken,

broken, and properly coloured, would remove the defect entirely. Were this done, we ſhould have nothing leſt to regret; except that the public will not, even on ſuch an occaſion as this, reſign their privilege of ſtanding on the ſtage; a ſituation in which the ſpectators cannot themſelves enjoy the real merits of the Drama, and muſt very conſiderably weaken its effect to thoſe who ſit before the curtain.

A few words concerning the very ſingular fable which forms the ground-work of this grand Pantomime, will complete the deſign of this ſhort eſſay. The ſtory is

no where extant in the works of any ancient writer, except in Apuleius, who gives to it more than two whole books of his metamorphoſes; and in Fulgentius*, who profeſſedly abridges the narration of Apuleius. But though the relation comes thus to us through the hands of Latin Authors, who lived ſo late as the ſecond and ſixth centuries, abundant proof is extant that it was tranſmitted to them from Greece, and belongs to the Mythology of much remoter times. The very name of Pſyche is Greek; and the repreſen-

* Mythologicon. Lib. iii. Cap. 6.

tations

tations of her union with Cupid, ſtill extant on gems, and executed by Greek artiſts, are very numerous.*

Omitting the flouriſhes and fantaſtic ornaments of Apuleius; the hiſtory of theſe loves and adventures is to the following effect:

" PSYCHE was daughter of a king and " queen, whoſe names are not record- " ed; ſhe was the youngeſt of three. " The elder ſiſters were moderately hand- " ſome, but the beauty of Pſyche was infi- " nitely ſuperior. She not only eclipſed " her ſiſters, but far tranſcended every

* See Spence's Polymetis. *Dial.* vii.

 " thing

" thing that hitherto had been ſeen on
" earth. As ſhe grew up her beauty be-
" came ſo very extraordinary, that not
" only the higheſt admiration, but even
" adoration, was paid to it by all be-
" holders. Multitudes flocked to the
" palace to worſhip this terreſtrial Ve-
" nus, till, by degrees, the temples of
" the celeſtial became deſerted. Venus,
" jealous of her honours, employed her
" ſon, by ſome unworthy paſſion, to hu-
" miliate and torment her rival *. But
Cupid,

* La Fontaine thus expreſſes her injunctions to him :

Prenez

" Cupid, when he ſaw her, inſtead of " executing theſe harſh commands, fell " deſperately in love himſelf *. The " two ſiſters in the mean time were mar- " ried; but no one was found among " mortals ſufficiently aſpiring even to

Prenez y garde; il vous faut y ſonger,
Rendez la malheureuſe, et que cette cadette
Malgré les ſiens, épouſe un etranger
Qui ne ſache où trouver retraite;
Qui ſoit laid, et qui la mal-traite:
La faſſe conſumer en regrets ſuperflus,
Tant que ne vous ni moi nous ne la craignons plus.

* Cupid is no leſs claſſically repreſented as at the age of 17 or 18, than in a more childiſh form. *See Spence.*

 " hope

" hope for Pſyche. The oracle of
" Apollo at Miletus was conſulted, and
" the anſwer was as follows:

" High on a rock, with pomp funereal grac'd,
" Expos'd, deſerted, be the Virgin plac'd:
" Nor hope a mortal huſband can be gain'd,
" Wild and pernicious he by fate ordain'd:
" Wafted on rapid wings, o'er earth and ſkies,
" With fire and ſteel deſtroying as he flies.
" Whoſe pow'r fills Jove and ev'ry god with dread,
" And ſhakes the gloomy kingdoms of the dead*.

* The original lines may be ſeen in Apuleius, who ſays, ſtrangely enough, " Sed Apollo, quam-
" vis Græcus et Ionicus, propter Mileſiæ condi-
" torem, ſic *Latina ſorte* reſpondit." Probably the oracle was not extant in Greek verſe, and Apuleius found it more eaſy to write one in Latin.

" The

" The oracle, however reluctantly, was
" obeyed: but from this diſmal ſitua-
" tion Pſyche was conveyed by Zephyr
" to a magnificent palace which her
" lover had prepared. She was ſerved
" there by inviſible agents, indulged
" with every delicacy and delight, and
" viſited nightly by her unknown huſ-
" band, whom ſhe never was permitted
" to behold.

" Notwithſtanding the myſterious ſin-
" gularity of this latter circumſtance,
" Pſyche was truly happy in her ſitua-
" tion. Nor had ſhe a doubt that her
" immortal huſband was as beautiful as

" he

" he was affectionate. But as it may in
" time grow irkſome even to enjoy a hap-
" pineſs, which we cannot communicate
" to thoſe moſt dear to us, Pſyche began
" at length to pine for the ſociety of her
" ſiſters. Cupid at firſt prohibited this
" intercourſe; but ere long the repeated
" intreaties of his beloved wife prevailed,
" and Zephyr was commanded to convey
" them alſo to the enchanted palace.

" Struck with envy at the delights
" which their ſiſter ſo abundantly en-
" joyed, and informed that ſhe held her
" happineſs on the ſole condition of be-
" ing contented not to ſee her huſband,

" theſe

" theſe perfidious women determined to
" occaſion her ruin. They reminded her
" of the anſwer of Apollo; and perſuad-
" ed her that this huſband who refuſed
" to be ſeen, muſt be, as the oracle im-
" plied, ſome dreadful and pernicious
" monſter; perhaps a ſerpent*, who,
" when ſated with the enjoyment of her
" charms, would put her to ſome dread-
" ful death. Pſyche was confounded
" and alarmed. The determination of
" her lover not to ſhow himſelf did in-

* This ſuppoſition ſeems to have been drawn by Apuleius, merely from the equivocal meaning of the word *vipereum* in his Latin oracle.

" deed

" deed appear to imply that his perſon,
" in ſome reſpect or other, was mon-
" ſtrous; and though ſhe had not before
" ſuſpected it, ſhe could not now ſuppreſs
" the idea, nor could ſhe reſt till ſhe
" had either confirmed or diſpelled the
" terrifying ſuſpicion.

" She watched the opportunity while
" her huſband ſlept, and having pro-
" vided herſelf with a lamp, approached
" with caution to ſatisfy her curioſity.
" What was her ſurprize and delight,
" when, inſtead of any thing deformed
" or miſſhapen, ſhe beheld the perfect
" and immortal beauty of the God of
" Love.

" Love. She gazed with inſatiable rap-
" ture, but in the delirium of her joy,
" inattentive to the management of her
" lamp, ſhe dropped ſome burning oil
" upon his ſhoulder, and roufed him
" from his ſleep. The deity was incenſed,
" and left her; yet not without diſplay-
" ing evident marks of pity and uncon-
" querable affection, even in the midſt of
" his indignation. He left her, notwith-
" ſtanding, the enchanted palace vaniſh-
" ed, and her miſeries now commenced.

" In deſpair at the recollection of
" her crime, the unfortunate Pſyche
" ran to a river, and hoping at once to

" ter-

" terminate all her ſorrows, plunged
" headlong into it; but the river refuſed
" to drown her, and threw her unhurt
" upon its banks. The god Pan now
" appeared and comforted her *, giving
" hopes that Cupid might be appeaſed,

* Pan was, as his name implies, the God of univerſal nature. Milton has not ſcrupled to apply the name to Chriſt:

" The ſhepherds on the lawn,
" Or o'er the point of dawn,
" Sat ſimply chatting in a ruſtic row;
" Full little thought they then,
" That the mighty *Pan*
" Was kindly come to live with them below."

Hymn on the Nativity.

" and

" and exhorting her by all poſſible
" means to labour for ſo deſirable an
" end.

" Then follow the trials of Pſyche,
" who is ſent to wander over the earth,
" and expoſed by the anger of Venus
" to many difficulties. What is moſt
" remarkable in her taſks and trials is,
" that under the preſſure of them ſhe
" is conſtantly relieved by ſome unex-
" pected or ſupernatural aſſiſtance.
" When commanded to aſſort a vaſt heap
" of mixed grain, ſhe is aided by the
" ants. When ſhe attempts to go to a
" place apparently inacceſſible, in ſearch

" of

" of a certain precious golden wool,
" the reeds whiſper to her the ſecret by
" which ſhe is enabled to ſucceed.
" When ſhe is ordered to fetch water
" from a fountain guarded by a mighty
" dragon, an eagle fills her vaſe, and
" brings it to her. And when at laſt
" ſhe has deſcended even to the infernal
" regions, and, by the vapour iſſuing
" from a box obtained from Proſerpine,
" has been ſtupified and left for dead,
" Cupid himſelf interpoſes to preſerve
" her. He revives her from her trance,
" he tranſports her from hell to heaven,
" intercedes with Jupiter in her behalf,

" and

" and the fable is concluded by her par-
" don, marriage, happineſs, and immor-
" tality."

In this very ſingular and curious ſtory, the Abbé Banier could diſcover nothing extraordinary. " It contains," ſays he, " no hiſtorical fact, and only reſembles " our fairy tales." He does, indeed, perceive it to be of an allegorical kind; and ſays, that it is meant to denote the evils that concupiſcence, figur'd by Cupid, entails upon the human ſoul: " But " where, he aſks, was the neceſſity for " loading this fiction with ſo many child-
" iſh circumſtances, for the ſake of ſo

" trite and vulgar a moral?"—The only anſwer to which queſtion, is, that the learned author did not in fact perceive the real moral; and has, therefore, given an interpretation perfectly inconſiſtent with ſome part of the allegory. For if Cupid was deſigned to repreſent concupiſcence, where was the moral deſign of the fabuliſt, in uniting Pſyche to him for ever?

Fulgentius, who lived in an age when allegory was highly faſhionable, has fallen into a different but not leſs conſiderable error, by allegorizing too minutely. He thus deſcribes the moral which, in his opinion, the

the ſtory was intended to convey. "The "kingdom of Pſyche's parents means "the *world*; the king and queen are "*God* and *matter*; their three daughters, "*carnality*, *freewill* *, and the *human* "*ſoul*. Venus repreſents *concupiſcence*, "and is jealous of Pſyche, and there-"fore ſends *deſire* or Cupid to deſtroy "her." In this ſtrain he proceeds to allegorize every trifling particular, till finding himſelf at a loſs, as it ſeems, for the application of the latter parts of the

* *Ultronietas*, a barbarous ſcholaſtic word, which the author himſelf thought it neceſſary to explain.

fable according to his ſyſtem, he ſuddenly breaks off, ſaying that he has given the clue, and leaves the unravelling it to others.

The circumſtance really extraordinary is, that there does actually appear to be concealed under this ſeeming fairy tale, ſome allegory of very high importance. Of this the name of the principal perſonage affords us the firſt intimation. *Pſyche* means, in Greek, *the human ſoul*; and it means alſo a *butterfly*. Of which apparently ſtrange double ſenſe, the undoubted reaſon is, that a butterfly was a very ancient ſymbol of the ſoul; ſo ancient, that probably, as Mr. Bryant aſ-

aſſerts, it was derived originally from Egypt. The propriety of this ſymbol is very juſtly remarked by Spence, in his Polymetis *. "Nothing," he tells us, "could point out the ſurvival and liberty "of the ſoul, after its ſeparation from "the body, in a ſtronger and more argu- "mentative manner, than an animal, "which is firſt a groſs, heavy, creeping in- "ſect, and which afterwards, dropping its "ſlough, becomes, by an amazing change, "a light, airy, flying, free, and happy

* *Dial.* 7. p. 71. See alſo what is ſaid by Mr. Bryant, to the ſame effect. *Mythol.* vol. ii. p. 388.

" creature." From the prevalence of this ſymbol, and the conſequent coincidence of the names, it happened that the Greek ſculptors frequently repreſented Pſyche as ſubject to Cupid, in the ſhape of a butterfly; and that even when ſhe appears in their works under a human form, we find her decorated with the light and filmy wings of that gay inſect *.

As to the allegory, I am not addicted enough to that ſpecies of interpretation,

* See the plates in Spence, and the beautiful Marlborough gem engraved in Mr. Bryant's Mythology, vol. ii.

to attempt to follow it minutely through all the ſubordinate parts of the fable, ſome of which were probably added merely for the ſake of ornament. Yet, I would aſk my readers ſeriouſly, whether, in the following general outline of it, there appear not ſomething very ſtriking, in the coincidence of all the principal circumſtances with facts recorded and delivered to us on the higheſt of all poſſible authority.

" *The human ſoul, formed originally of*
" *exquiſite purity and beauty, is placed in*
" *a ſtate of refined happineſs; of which,*
" *however, ſome of the principal cauſes*

" *are concealed. Amidſt the enjoyments*
" *offered to her, one prohibition only is in-*
" *terpoſed. It is required, as the con-*
" *dition on which the continuance of her*
" *happineſs depends, that ſhe ſhall not at-*
" *tempt to gain forbidden knowledge con-*
" *cerning the author of her bliſsful ſtate.*
" *Contrary to her own better judgment,*
" *ſhe is over perſuaded by wicked and*
" *malicious ſuggeſtion, and actually ac-*
" *quires the knowledge ſhe was ſo ſtrictly*
" *ordered not to ſeek. Her curioſity and*
" *diſobedience are fatal. She is driven*
" *from her ſtate of happineſs, and ſent to*
" *wander over the earth, amidſt innume-*

" *rable*

" *rable difficulties and trials. Yet con-*
" *ſtantly, whenever ſhe is in danger of*
" *ſinking under the ſeverity of her ſitua-*
" *tion, ſome ſupernatural interpoſition* *
" *prevents her from deſpairing, and kindly*
" *enables her to perform that which na-*
" *turally was beyond her powers. Even*
" *in the firſt moment of condemnation, her*
" *judge, we are told, ſhowed manifeſt to-*
" *kens of an affection to which every other*
" *conſideration was ſubordinate. And fi-*
" *nally, when ſhe is depreſſed, even to*
" *Hell, by the difficulties which aſſail*
" *her, divine love* (for ſo, with Mr.

* i. e. Some divine revelation.

" Bryant,

" Bryant, I am inclined to interpret Cu-
" pid) *interpoſes for her relief, and not*
" *only reſcues her from the horrors of that*
" *dreadful place, but, uniting her with*
" *himſelf, places her for ever in a ſtate*
" *of tranſcendent exaltation, and of per-*
" *fect bliſs.*"

Such is this extraordinary allegory, which that I have not in any reſpect miſ-repreſented, may be ſeen by recurrence to Apuleius, Fulgentius, or Banier. Now, if it be true, as I believe has been conjec-tured, that the myſtic fables and hierogly-phics of the Egyptians concealed, as be-neath a veil, thoſe important truths which

at

at firſt were known univerſally to men, but which in other places, except where preſerved by divine interpoſition, were loſt, corrupted, or forgotten: if this, I ſay, be true, if it be even probable, why may we not conſider this fable of Cupid and Pſyche as a ſingular and very curious inſtance of the perfect preſervation of one of theſe religious allegories. The Greeks, it is well known, even by their own confeſſion, borrowed from Egypt all their mythology; but, if this interpretation be admitted, we can hardly expect to diſcover, among all their theſts, another of any comparable importance.

So

So very obvious is the general tendency of this allegorical tale, that few writers have entirely overlooked it. Spence gives evident proof that he ſuſpected it, where he ſays, that "there muſt have been a "great deal of good ſenſe, *and perhaps* "*ſomething above good ſenſe*, in the fixing "on this emblem." The late Dr. Gloſter Ridley, a man very eminent for his learning, piety, and abilities, perceived the ſame coincidence, and has left upon the ſubject a very elegant poem, in which he has contrived to make the ſtory, as his preface tells us, a kind of heathen *Paradiſe Loſt*. This poem, which firſt appeared

appeared in Dodſley's Collection, has been republiſhed ſince the author's death, with a continuation, under the title of *Melampus*, or *Religious Groves**. But in this additional part, Dr. Ridley thought proper, why is not ſo clear, to drop the heathen allegory, and to form one of his own. Yet there is, throughout the whole compoſition, a vein of true poetry, an intimate knowledge of antiquity, and a ſtrong impreſſion of religious ſentiment, which cannot fail to make it delightful to all by whom thoſe qualities are held in proper eſtimation.

* Printed for Dodſley in 1781.

Mo-

Moliere and La Fontaine have both handled this ſubject. But what the former has written bears evident marks of the haſte and precipitation which the urgency of Royal command occaſioned: and the fairy tale of La Fontaine, for it pretends to be no more, has no merit but that of being elegant in that trifling ſpecies of compoſition. For my own part, I have not expreſsly applied the correſponding paſſages of ſacred hiſtory to the allegory, becauſe to me the coincidence appeared too ſtrong for any negligence to overlook.

From all that has been ſaid, may we not

not draw ſuch a concluſion, as muſt incline us in future to look a little beyond the external ſurfaces of things? For we have found, that what we have been uſed to regard, perhaps rather ſlightly, as a mere dance, and a diſplay of ſcenery, is in fact an admirable compoſition of a very elegant ſpecies; a fine ſpecimen of an art long conſidered by the learned as loſt; and conveys an allegory, under the thin veil of which lie hidden ſome of the moſt important and fundamental truths of genuine religion.

FINIS.

Juſt publiſhed,

Stockdale's Edition of Shakſpeare; including, in One Volume, 8vo. the whole of his Dramatic Works; with Explanatory Notes, compiled from various Commentators; to which are prefixed his Life and Will. Price only 15s.

Poems on various Subjects. By Henry James Pye, Eſq. M. P. Elegantly printed in Two Vols. 8vo. and embelliſhed with beautiful Frontiſpieces. Price 12s. in Boards.

Eſſays on Hunting: containing a Philoſophical Enquiry into the Nature and Properties of the Scent; and Obſervations on the different Kinds of Hounds, with the Manner of training them. Alſo, Directions for the Choice of a Hunter; the Qualifications requiſite for a Huntſman; and other General Rules to be obſerved in every contingency incident to the Chace. With an Introduction, deſcribing the Method of Hare Hunting, practiſed by the Greeks. A new Edition: With a Supplement, containing an Account of the Vizier's Manner of Hunting in the Mogul Empire. By William Blane, Eſq. In one Volume 8vo. Price 4s. in Boards.

A ſhort Account of the Prince of Wales's Iſland, or Pulo Peenang, in the Eaſt Indies, given to Captain Light by the King of Quedah. Ornamented with an elegant Engraving, repreſenting "A View of the North Point of the Prince of Wales's Iſland, and the Ceremony of chriſtening it." Taken on the Spot by Captain Trapaud, Engineer. Beautifully printed on a fine Copperplate Paper. Price 2s. 6d.

The Poetic of Ariſtotle, tranſlated from the Greek, with Notes. By Henry James Pye, Eſq. Neatly printed on a fine Writing Paper, in a ſmall Pocket Volume.

Third & Last Part.

The scene represents the palace of Venus, terminated by a throne.

Scene the First

Venus is seated on her throne. Adonis seated at her feet. the Graces surround & crown her. little Loves & Zephyrs are group'd in various ways. The sports, the smiles, & Nymphs in the suite of Venus, form the brilliant court of that deity.

Venus & Adonis, who breathe nothing but pleasure express their delight in various light movements.

Scene 2d.

Love & Psyche appear, & their unexpected presence suspends the sports. at the sight of Psyche Venus gives way to her anger: she cannot forgive her for being the most beautiful of mortals; she cannot pardon her, having, thro' the influence of her charms, carried away from her so much adoration, & ravish'd Love from her empire. Here the God turns suppliant. Psyche humiliates herself & implores favor: Venus disdains to listen to their supplications. she repulses Psyche with indignation, & continues deaf to the intreaties of Love.